DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 445 262 CE 080 754

AUTHOR	Malone, Susan E.; Arnove, Robert F.
TITLE	Planning Learner-Centred Adult Literacy Programmes. Fundamentals of Educational Planning 58.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Paris (France). International Inst. for Educational Planning.
SPONS AGENCY	Swedish International Development Cooperation Authority, Stockholm.
ISBN	ISBN-92-803-1168-9
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	82p.
AVAILABLE FROM	IIEP Publications, 7 place de Fontency, 75700 Paris, France ($15).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; Adult Educators; *Adult Literacy; Adult Programs; Agency Cooperation; Classroom Techniques; Community Programs; Cooperative Planning; Culturally Relevant Education; Curriculum Development; Developed Nations; Developing Nations; Educational Needs; Educational Objectives; Educational Planning; Educational Practices; Educational Research; Foreign Countries; Guidelines; Instructional Materials; *Literacy Education; Marketing; Material Development; Needs Assessment; Participative Decision Making; *Program Administration; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Public Relations; Reading Instruction; Resource Allocation; Staff Development; *Student Centered Curriculum; Student Recruitment; *Sustainable Development; Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

This booklet, which is intended for individuals engaged in educational planning and administration, senior government officials, and policymakers in developing and developed countries alike, provides guidance regarding planning, implementing, and administering learner-centered adult literacy programs. Chapter 1 examines the following topics related to the importance of literacy and planning: literacy and its role in development; planning and implementation as a cyclical process; and planning, implementation, and management as a participatory process. The following are among the aspects of preliminary decision making discussed in Chapter 2: decisions about program goals and objectives; decisions about program size and scope; decisions about the language(s) of instruction; and decisions about the types of literacy classes that will be established. Chapter 3 outlines strategies for program implementation and maintenance that deal with the following areas of activity: preliminary research; promotion; recruiting and training literacy personnel; developing curricula; developing and producing reading materials; and evaluation. Chapter 4 considers the following features of sustainable literacy programs: (1) wise use of human, material, and financial resources; (2) cooperative relationships among supporting agencies; (3) institutionalized infrastructures; and (4) opportunities for ongoing education. The bibliography lists 31 references. (MN)

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ED 445 262

Fundamentals of Educational Planning

58

Planning learner-centred adult literacy programmes

Susan E. Malone
Robert F. Arnove

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Planning learner-centred adult literacy programmes

Susan E. Malone
Robert F. Arnove

Paris 1998
UNESCO : International Institute for Educational Planning

The Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (Sida) has provided financial assistance for the publication of this booklet.

Published in 1998 by the United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
7 place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris
Printed in France by Stedi, 75018 Paris

Cover design by Bruno Pfäffli
ISBN 92-803-1168-9
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Fundamentals of educational planning

The booklets in this series are written primarily for two types of clientele: those engaged in educational planning and administration, in developing as well as developed countries; and others, less specialized, such as senior government officials and policy-makers who seek a more general understanding of educational planning and of how it is related to overall national development. They are intended to be of use either for private study or in formal training programmes.

Since this series was launched in 1967 practices and concepts of educational planning have undergone substantial change. Many of the assumptions which underlay earlier attempts to rationalise the process of educational development have been criticised or abandoned. Even if rigid mandatory centralized planning has now clearly proven to be inappropriate, this does not mean that all forms of planning have been dispensed with. On the contrary, the need for collecting data, evaluating the efficiency of existing programmes, undertaking a wide range of studies, exploring the future and fostering broad debate on these bases to guide educational policy and decision-making has become even more acute than before.

The scope of educational planning has been broadened. In addition to the formal system of education, it is now applied to all other important educational efforts in non-formal settings. Attention to the growth and expansion of educational systems is being comple-mented and sometimes even replaced by a growing concern for the quality of the entire educational process and for the control of its results. Finally, planners and administrators have become more and more aware of the importance of implementation strategies and of the role of different regulatory mechanisms in this respect: the choice of financ-ing methods, the examination and certification procedures or various other regulation and incentive structures. The concern of planners is twofold: to reach a better understanding of the validity of education in its own empirically observed specific dimensions and to help in defining appropriate strategies for change.

The purpose of these booklets includes monitoring the evolution and change in educational policies and their effect upon educational planning requirements; highlighting current issues of educational planning and analysing them in the context of their historical and societal setting; and disseminating methodologies of planning which can be applied in the context of both the developed and the developing countries.

In order to help the Institute identify the real up-to-date issues in educational planning and policy-making in different parts of the world, an Editorial Board has been appointed, composed of two general editors and associate editors from different regions, all professionals of high repute in their own field. At the first meeting of this new Editorial Board in January 1990, its members identified key topics to be covered in the coming issues under the following headings:

1. Education and development.
2. Equity considerations.
3. Quality of education.
4. Structure, administration and management of education.
5. Curriculum.
6. Cost and financing of education.
7. Planning techniques and approaches.
8. Information systems, monitoring and evaluation.

Each heading is covered by one or two associate editors.

The series has been carefully planned but no attempt has been made to avoid differences or even contradictions in the views expressed by the authors. The Institute itself does not wish to impose any official doctrine. Thus, while the views are the responsibility of the authors and may not always be shared by UNESCO or the IIEP, they warrant attention in the international forum of ideas. Indeed, one of the purposes of this series is to reflect a diversity of experience and opinions by giving different authors from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity of expressing their views on changing theories and practices in educational planning.

This booklet is concerned with the planning and implementation of a literacy programme. Addressed to educational practitioners working at central, regional or local level, it clearly shows them how to conceptualise, design, implement, monitor and evaluate literacy programmes.

It emphasises that planning at the national, regional and local level implies a process which integrates bottom-up and top-down approaches. Then, recognising that one of the challenges of literacy programmes is to mobilize the learners, it focuses on the grassroots and proposes dialogue as a working method. Indeed, one of its main assumptions is that a programme which has a relevant curriculum and which is centred on the learner is more likely to motivate the individual and to produce an impact at community level.

This booklet is practical and oriented towards action. Based on extensive experience of what works in the field, it should be very useful reading for those concerned with launching a literacy programme. Susan E. Malone, who co-authored it with Robert F. Arnove, is currently a Visiting Professor at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand as well as having an appointment at the University of Texas, in Arlington (USA). Robert F. Arnove is co-editor of *National Literacy Programmes* and currently Professor of International and Comparative Education at Indiana University, Bloomington, USA. The IIEP is very grateful for their most valuable contribution to our series.

The Institute would also like to thank Richard Sack, Executive Secretary of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, special editor for this issue, for the active role he played in its preparation.

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Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the constructive comments of H.S. Bhola on an initial draft of this monograph.

Preface

Literacy programmes, campaigns and projects are very complex matters. The chain of events, big and small, that their implementation requires is multi-dimensional and anything but linear. Planning such events, let alone the entire chain, is a special challenge. Unlike formal schooling, there are no systemic underpinnings, infrastructure and organizational bases. The target population of literacy programmes tends to be age heterogeneous. The pedagogical methods varied and highly adapted to the context. Often, literacy programmes and campaigns have had strong political and ideological grounding.

The importance of literacy initiatives for sustainable development is clearly recognized. How to attain this, however, is the subject of much investigation, debate and experimentation. Based on direct experience and examples from about 10 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, this booklet focuses on the management of literacy programmes. Nonetheless, it concludes that the most important factor in the success of such programmes is the quality, commitment and competence of the people who run them. The booklet also takes a careful look at the failed promises of literacy programmes and campaigns.

For this treatment of the subject, management includes a number of factors, including: curricula, books and other learning materials, logistics, the roles of learners and communities, evaluation, NGOs and the state. In this complex matrix, the main emphasis of the booklet is on participatory, community-based and adult-oriented policies and programmes that meet the daily needs of individuals and their communities.

This monograph is intended to be a useful resource (or guide) for those who plan and implement programmes at all levels of the 'chain of events' leading to the acquisition of sustainable and empowering literacy skills for individuals and communities.

The authors of this booklet have extensive practical and theoretical experience in the development of literacy programmes. Susan Malone has helped in establishing programmes of maternal language literacy in Papua New Guinea, Thailand and Northern Australia. Robert Arnove has studied grass-roots literacy programmes in Latin America, particularly in Nicaragua.

Richard Sack
Associate Editor

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Introduction

This booklet is about planning learner-centred adult literacy programmes that promote people-centred development. It is intended for those who are responsible for planning, implementing and managing literacy programmes at national, sub-national and local levels. The discussions that follow are based on three premises. First, planning, implementation and management are interdependent parts of a single process rather than separate activities. Planning does not end when implementation begins, nor does implementation end when management begins. A book about planning for literacy, then, necessarily focuses also on implementing and managing literacy programmes.

Second, planning at national, sub-national, and local levels is an integrated process that is 'bottom-up' as well as 'top-down'. Planners at each level take into account the goals, objectives and activities that are included in the plans at each of the other levels. A plan for a provincial-level programme, for example, should be congruent with relevant policies and plans at the national level and should facilitate implementation of plans that have been (or will be) developed by local communities.

Third, planning for literacy requires an ability to see the 'big picture' – to consider the different components of the programme as an integrated whole and to look beyond the programme itself to the ways that the adult learners will use what they have learned in society. Conceptualizing a literacy programme as one 'system' interacting with other societal systems (economic, sociocultural, political, religious) alerts planners, implementers, and managers to the ways that the literacy effort might impact these systems and be impacted by them in turn. Planning an employment-oriented literacy programme for migrant women is an example of 'systems planning'. In this case, planners would need to take into account the wage-earning opportunities for women in the area (the economic system), the community attitude towards women working outside the home (the sociocultural system), and government policies relating to migrants in general (the political system). 'Systems thinking' reminds us that literacy is a political, economic and sociocultural act as well as a process for teaching reading, writing and numeracy.

The remainder of the booklet is divided into five chapters. *Chapter One* discusses several different ways of thinking about literacy and planning, each of which has different consequences for the programme and for its intended beneficiaries. *Chapter Two* presents several preliminary issues that require decisions before planning of specific components of the programme begins. *Chapter Three* discusses six strategies for implementation that are essential components of any programme plan, regardless of its size or the context in which it takes place. *Chapter Four* presents a discussion of the features common to 'successful' literacy programmes – those that achieved their goals and have been sustained over a period of years. The last chapter concludes with a summary of the main points and their implications for educational planners.

Several terms are used frequently throughout the booklet. *Stakeholders* and *stakeholder groups* refer to all those individuals and entities involved in and affected by the literacy effort – planners, implementers, managers, donors, supporters, and the adult learners themselves. *Infrastructures* refer to the frameworks or systems that are required to sustain the different components of the programme. An infrastructure for evaluation, for example, would include the people, procedures, forms, and schedules that are put in place to make sure that the programme is regularly assessed and that the results of the assessments are an integral part of ongoing planning. *NGOs* refer to non-governmental organizations that support literacy programmes, ideally in co-operation with government agencies. *National, sub-national* and *local* refer to the geographic scope of the literacy programme. A national-level programme involves the entire nation, or a significant portion of it, and is sponsored either by the government, by one or more NGOs, or by government and NGOs working together. Sub-national programmes are those implemented in one or more states or provinces or in one or more language groups. A local-level programme targets a single segment of the population such as a village, or an identifiable group living in the larger society, for example, a women's group established in a migrant settlement. In multilingual contexts, local-level might also refer to programmes for a small language group that covers more than one village.

To use the information presented in these chapters, the following process is suggested. First, read through the entire booklet to get a general idea of the factors that should be considered in planning a sustainable literacy programme. As you read, jot down the ideas that seem most relevant to your situation. Second, make a general outline of your plan that includes information already available to you. Next, based on the ideas presented here, on your own experience in planning (specifically in literacy), and on your knowledge of your situation, identify the kinds of additional information that you will need. Once you have gathered that new information, your team will be ready to start developing the specific components of your plan. Remember, you are the one that knows best what 'works' and what does not in your situation, so feel free to adapt the ideas that are presented here so they work best for you.

I. Thinking about and planning for literacy

The way people work together to carry out planned activities is influenced by several factors. First is the context in which the activities take place – the 'rules' of society, written and unwritten, that guide interactions in general. Examples are the government policies that guide development efforts and the societal norms that influence interactions between different social classes or between women and men. The resources that are available to carry out planned activities are also factors that affect co-operative efforts for literacy. A well-funded adult literacy programme will be conducted quite differently from one that is poorly funded, and a programme for a small language group speaking a previously unwritten language will be planned differently from one with a long written tradition and a wide variety of reading materials. A third factor relates to the way people think about literacy and their beliefs about the way the programme should be conducted. The remainder of this short chapter focuses on this third factor as it affects the relationships of those involved in planning, implementing and managing literacy programmes and influences the programme's short-term and long-term outcomes, both for the learners and for the society in which the programme takes place.

Literacy and its role in development

The way people think about and plan for development began changing in the 1980s. Until then most development programmes were based on the assumption that societies progress inevitably, but over varying periods of time, to modernity. The goal, therefore, was to help the 'developing' nations (or segments of population within a nation) to establish the value systems, practices and infrastructures that would accelerate their socio-economic progress and make them like the more 'developed' ones.

Newer definitions focus on community-building rather than on modernization. Development is conceptualized as a process in which individuals, living and working together, grow in their ability to define problems, plan solutions, and initiate and control constructive change. The concern, therefore, is less with increasing industrialization and expanding the economy and more with encouraging and supporting people as they take responsible control of the world around them.

As conceptions of development have evolved, so have conceptions of literacy and its role in the development process. 'Traditional' approaches considered literacy a technical skill that involved decoding and encoding written symbols. The assumption was that before people could gain meaning from and use the written word, they had to learn to match correctly the marks on a printed page with their corresponding sounds. Once they had mastered these basic skills, the new literates should continue to gain fluency and the ability and motivation to use reading, writing and numeracy for their own purposes.

Newer approaches to literacy consider reading as more than encoding and decoding printed symbols. Literacy is seen as an integral part of development, a tool that helps learners understand better the political and social forces that impact their lives. This social and political awareness is not a goal that is reached after learners gain basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. Rather, both the content of the lessons and the manner in which literacy and numeracy are taught should enable learners to gain the confidence and ability to participate actively in decision-making on matters that affect them. An experience from India's mass literacy programme demonstrates this point:

> Literacy by itself had no meaning or relevance for those with whom we worked – those who were on the fringes of urban life, dehumanized by the physical and material existence endemic in situations of urban poverty . . . Women attended our literacy classes only as long as it

> took them to find work, anything to help augment the family's meagre monthly income. They bluntly told our teachers to go way [sic], or stick to teaching children. Learning how to sign their names or write the alphabet would not help to fill empty bellies.
>
> So, we stopped worrying about literacy as an end in itself, or as being central to our work. We began to work together with the people in trying to understand their immediate and daily concerns and difficulties; learning together to analyze the problems and understand the root causes; then planning how we could, together, find the answers and, above all, take action (Ramdas, 1987).

Planning and implementation as a cyclical process

Perceptions of policy formulation and implementation also began changing in the 1980s. Before that time the general perception was that the two tasks were distinct and sequential activities-that when policy formulation ends, implementation begins. Research beginning in the late 1970s (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1979), revealed instead that the two are not distinct processes but compose a cycle that repeats itself throughout the life of a programme: policy is formulated, implemented, assessed (formally or informally), adapted, further implemented, re-assessed, and so on. This reconceptualization of the process provides several valuable insights for literacy planners. It sees assessment as integral to the decision-making and implementation process. It also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between planners, implementers, and managers at each level of the programme and of built-in flexibility that allows programme plans to be adapted as needed.

Planning, implementation and management as a participatory process

In development-oriented approaches to literacy, each group of stakeholders – those who provide financial and other support for the programme, those who take overall responsibility for implementation and management, and the prospective learners themselves – is represented in decision-making. Shared decision-making helps to ensure that programmes are relevant to the people they are meant to serve and encourages a sense of mutual responsibility and ownership – essential ingredients for sustainability. A study of 16 development projects in Africa and Asia identified the long-term benefits of this participatory approach for development projects:

> . . . projects were more likely to succeed when their objectives corresponded to the priorities of the poor, and where the intended beneficiaries were regularly consulted and involved in decision-making at all stages of the project cycle. Although there was some evidence of success in projects lacking in participation, the benefits derived were unlikely to be sustained over the longer term without more direct involvement (Robinson, 1992).

Several small-scale literacy programmes in West Africa illustrate this participatory approach at the local level. In Cameroon, committees in each community took responsibility for mobilizing support for their adult literacy programme and identifying the community's needs that would be served by it (Robinson, 1990). In Côte d'Ivoire, a bilingual literacy programme began with numeracy rather than reading and writing because that was the need identified by the learners (Burmeister, 1987). And in mother-tongue literacy projects in Ghana, people in each community took responsibility for all aspects of their programmes, from selecting teachers to preparing and distributing literature (Hampton, 1994).

The process of participatory decision-making is not without its problems. Stakeholders might agree on their programme's goals, for example, but not on the means for achieving them. Different groups may have different priorities or they may not share the same sense of urgency about different components of their programme. They may disagree about who should be in leadership or how resources should be used. Those with overall responsibility for the programme may conclude that involving people in decision-making takes longer and is less 'efficient' than doing the job themselves. Also, the people who are invited to participate may be confused and intimidated by the system they have been invited to join. The decision for stakeholders is whether the short- and long-term benefits to the programme and to its beneficiaries are worth the difficulties they might encounter. Experiences from around the world would indicate that they are.

Summary

This chapter has discussed three underlying issues that affect the manner in which literacy programmes are planned, implemented and maintained. First is the way that programme sponsors and initiators conceptualize literacy and its place in development. Second is the way they conceptualize planning and implementation, either as separate and sequential or as integrated and cyclical processes. Finally is their perception of their own roles vis-à-vis others who will be involved in and affected by the programme. The manner in which programme sponsors and initiators respond to these issues constitutes their first decision – either conscious or unconscious – about the way the programme will be developed and maintained.

II. Preliminary decision-making

Before they begin developing the plan for implementing their literacy programme, planners need to consider several larger issues relating to the general nature of the programme: What principles will guide it? What will be its goals and objectives? How big will the programme be? What languages will be used? What kinds of classes will be established?

This chapter responds to the questions above. It introduces several issues that should be considered before the specific components of the programme are planned. The discussions that follow are general so that planners at national, sub-national, and local levels can use their creativity in adapting the ideas to their own situations. Experiences from different parts of the world provide examples of the variety of ways that these ideas can be implemented in different contexts.

Decisions about the principles that will guide the programme

The guiding principles are general statements that direct the actions and behaviour of those involved in planning, implementing, and managing a literacy programme. In programmes that are learner-centred, guiding principles are the product of dialogue among representatives of all the stakeholder groups. A guiding principle for a community-wide adult literacy programme might be: 'Instructional methods and reading materials should affirm and build on the learners' life experiences.' Guiding principles for a nationwide or statewide programme might be: 'Supporting agencies should work together rather than compete with each other to implement and manage the programme.' Another guiding principle might be that, 'At each level and at each place of implementation, priority should be given to identifying and utilizing resources that are already available, rather than depending on outside resources to sustain the programme.'

Decisions about the programme's goals and objectives

Programme goals. A programme's goals describe in general terms what the stakeholders hope will happen in the future as a result of the literacy programme – its intended long-term consequences for the learners, the community, the education system, and for the nation as a whole. They describe an ideal future but are realistic so that stakeholders will be encouraged as they see themselves making progress. Goals for learner-centred literacy programmes are congruent with national policies and plans and also with the educational goals of the prospective learners – their reasons for wanting to be literate. In a city-wide literacy programme for out-of-school or unemployed youth, for example, a goal formulated by the learners might be that they will have the knowledge, skills and motivation to find and keep gainful employment. An additional goal of the programme – this one formulated by the programme's sponsors – might be that the crime rate among the city's youth will be reduced. A goal for a state-sponsored transitional literacy programme for new immigrants might be that the immigrant-learners will become an integral part of their new society (a goal of the sponsors) and also become fluent in the language of their new country (an additional goal of the learners).

The process of setting goals begins by seeking agreement among stakeholders at each level of implementation about why the programme is needed – the problems it is meant to solve – and achieving a consensus regarding the overall purpose it will serve. At national and sub-national levels, goal-setting might be the focus of early planning sessions involving representatives of the different groups who will implement, manage and support the programme at that level, together with representatives of the prospective learners. At local level, a community's goals for literacy might be formulated through formal meetings and informal discussions with the prospective learners, community leaders, and with local government agencies and NGOs.

Programme objectives. Objectives describe the specific targets that are to be reached within the period of time covered in the programme plan. They are the explicit statements on which the programme will be periodically assessed in the process of achieving the programme's long-term goals. Objectives are flexible so that they can be adjusted if assessment reveals that they are unrealistic or that they are not serving the purposes for which they were planned. An objective for a community literacy programme for out-of-school youth might relate to the number of learners that will complete the course in the first two years. At sub-national level, an objective might state the number of teachers that will be trained within a specific time period or the number of training centres that will be established. A national-level objective might list the number of states or provinces in which literature production centres will be established in the first three years. Whether planning takes place at national, sub-national, or local levels, the process of formulating objectives requires knowledge of the resources and activities that are necessary for the programme to be sustained, as well as awareness of the resources that are already available and the activities that are already taking place.

Decisions about the programme's size and scope

Decisions about the size and scope of a literacy programme are influenced by the needs and goals of the learners and by the political, economic and sociocultural context in which the programme will take place. Three common approaches are the mass campaign and large-scale and small-scale projects. Bhola (1994) distinguished between large-scale and small-scale literacy efforts by labelling the larger ones 'programmes' and the smaller ones 'projects'. In this monograph, the term 'programme' refers to literacy efforts in general.

Mass campaigns. Mass campaigns are usually initiated by the government and depend on sustained and intensive government leadership at national, sub-national and local levels, usually with the support of relevant NGOs. The goal of a campaign is to make large numbers of people literate within a specified time-frame in order to consolidate large-scale social and/or political changes (Bhola, 1994). Vast human and material resources are mobilized. Decision-making is centralized, although day-to-day management may be localized. Curricula and instructional materials focus on issues that the government considers important, although there may be flexibility in adapting the ideas to local contexts.

Viet Nam's literacy programme is an example of a mass campaign, actually three separate campaigns, initiated between 1954 and the late 1970s. The purpose of the campaigns was to promote national unity and economic growth through a more literate populace. Teacher-training workshops stressed patriotism as well as instructional strategies. The government provided full-time instructors and learning materials but village co-operatives were expected to take responsibility for funding first- and second-level classes. Decisions made at the national level were carried out by volunteers in local communities. All three campaigns were implemented in the midst of armed conflict and economic embargoes and without outside funding or support (NGO Van Cat, in Bhola, 1984).

Nicaragua's literacy crusade was also intended to develop a new and unified national identity. The programme was initiated by the new government in 1980 but planning and decision-making were to be more decentralized. A National Co-ordinating Commission consisting of 25 ministerial, political, military, educational, cultural, religious, and 'mass' or local organizations was established within the Department of Education to set overall policy and facilitate implementation. Parallel co-ordinating commissions were also established at departmental and municipal or local levels. Most of the actual planning for implementation took place at the municipal level. And it was in the municipalities that organizations worked together most co-operatively and that participation of the intended beneficiaries was greatest (Arnove, 1987).

An advantage of the campaign approach is that government power and resources are put at the disposal of the literacy programme. Governments have the means of establishing a favourable political climate and mobilizing resources and popular support that usually are not available to smaller programmes. A disadvantage of the campaign approach is that maintaining the programme over a long period of time requires a level of political and economic commitment that few governments are able or willing to sustain. Another potential problem is that a mass campaign, with its top-down approach to decision-making, might discourage the level of 'grass-roots' initiative and ownership that is necessary if the literacy programme is to survive when government support declines. A third potential disadvantage is that a mass campaign can be a tool for political indoctrination rather than for promoting equity. Finally, the mass campaign approach is ill-suited to multilingual and/or multicultural contexts. Centralized curricula and materials are ineffective if learners do not understand the language of instruction and if the content of the lessons does not relate to their own educational goals.

Large-scale projects. Large-scale projects also cover multiple political, geographic, and/or sociocultural areas, but they lack the intensity and unifying focus of mass campaigns (Bhola, 1994). Primary responsibility for large-scale projects may rest either with a government agency or with one or more NGOs, or the programme may be under the joint sponsorship of a government agency and an NGO working in co-operation. Overall goals and objectives may be established by the sponsoring agencies but because there is less control from the 'top', decisions are more easily adapted to sub-national and local contexts. Decisions about the language of instruction and content of the lessons, for example, may be left to local communities.

An example of a large-scale project is the national Literacy and Awareness Programme in Papua New Guinea, established by the government in 1989 to support NGOs and communities that had been conducting their own small-scale projects for decades (Malone, 1989). Responsibility for the smaller projects remained mostly with the groups that had originally initiated them. Government support involved developing curriculum guidelines and prototype reading materials that could be adapted to different language and cultural situations, sponsoring training workshops, and allocating grants to NGOs and communities for teacher training and literature production.

An advantage of large-scale projects that are established in response to grass-roots' initiatives is that they build on infrastructures already in place at sub-national and local levels. The decentralized structure tends to reduce top-down control, leaving decisions about individual programmes to the people who know best what is needed and what will work in their situation. Curricula and reading materials, for example, can be modified to fit the educational goals of the learners. A possible disadvantage is that a large-scale programme needs the ongoing co-ordination and support of a central agency. If the programme is dependent on the voluntary involvement of NGOs, it may be endangered if the NGOs leave or lose their funding. Decentralized control may also result in duplication of efforts if, for example, each of the supporting NGOs produce their own curriculum frameworks or teaching guides or establish their own materials production centres. Finally, the use of multiple languages can complicate the development of reading and teaching materials and may place a burden on limited human and material resources.

Small-scale projects. Small-scale projects are geared to a specific audience (a single language group or dialect, a single community, or a single interest group within a community) and serve a specific purpose (health education, family planning, income generation, etc.). They are usually sponsored by an NGO that also takes responsibility for training teachers and providing instructional and reading materials.

The Adivasi adult literacy programme in Andhra Pradesh Province in India is an example of a small-scale project (Gustafsson, 1991). Integrated with a local development programme, its purpose is to help people become literate in their mother tongue in order to facilitate their transition to Telegu, the regional language, and improve their economic conditions. Local institutions take responsibility for managing and supervising the programme, developing curriculum and reading materials, and recruiting and training personnel.

Small-scale projects usually originate outside the bureaucracy and in close co-operation with the learners. They tend to be more flexible than large-scale projects or campaigns and are able to respond more rapidly to the changing needs of the people they serve. The most obvious disadvantage of small-scale projects is that they reach relatively few people. And because of their narrow support base, small projects are endangered if local infrastructures have not been firmly established and local people have not been equipped to maintain them.

Decisions about the language(s) of instruction

In multilingual contexts, choosing a language for literacy, or for education in general, is a complex task that must take into account a multitude of social, cultural, economic and political factors. Some governments choose to use a single language in their campaigns or large projects in order to promote national unity or to ease the burden of producing literacy materials and training teachers. Others contend that using a single language serves a 'gate keeping' function: only minority language speakers who are willing to sacrifice their traditional languages and cultures are able to move successfully through the education system. Some who advocate mother tongue for early education also contend that too great a cognitive burden is placed on learners who "are expected to learn in a foreign language from teachers who are speaking a foreign language, using materials written in a foreign language, about concepts that are foreign to everyone's personal experience" (Gustafsson, 1991).

Until the 1980s, large-scale mother-tongue literacy programmes in multilingual societies, with or without later transfer to a dominant language, were rare. Relatively few governments had developed language and literacy policies that supported multilingualism and fewer still had made the commitment in time and resources that were required to develop and maintain literacy programmes in multiple languages. Among the exceptions were pre-primary education programmes in Namibia and Papua New Guinea (Harlech-Jones, 1986 [Namibia]; National Department of Education, 1991 [Papua New Guinea]). The intent of the programmes in these two countries was to teach children in their local language for the first three years of school, after which they moved into primary grades in which English was the language of instruction. These nationwide programmes for children could serve as models for large-scale adult literacy programmes elsewhere if sponsoring agencies are prepared to make the commitment that is required for such efforts.

Decisions about the types of literacy classes that will be established

Another issue for planners to consider relates to the type (or types) of classes that will be established to serve the specific needs of the learners and build on the abilities they already possess. Four general types of classes can be identified, based on four general stages of literacy.

Basic literacy. Basic literacy classes are for people who have had little or no previous formal or non-formal education but whose personal and occupational goals require literacy and numeracy. Curriculum, instructional methods, and reading materials build on the learners' well-developed understanding of their language and culture and begin immediately to encourage them to be involved actively in the affairs of the world around them.

Fluency. In fluency classes, readers who have achieved a basic level of proficiency consolidate and expand their uses of reading, writing and numeracy to meet their expanding educational goals. Fluency classes might also be established to help more literate adults move into the formal education system or into vocational training programmes by preparing them for entrance examinations or introducing them to the kinds of reading materials they will be expected to use in the ongoing education programme.

Transitional literacy. In bilingual or multilingual contexts, transitional classes are for people who have become proficient readers in their mother tongue and now want to transfer their literacy skills into a second (or third) language. Labelling this type of literacy class 'transitional' assumes that the learners already speak the second language and are now ready to learn to read and write in it.

Post-literacy. Post-literacy educational opportunities enable learners to continue their education in the formal or vocational systems or through special interest classes, reading clubs, and other educational opportunities in their local communities. Equally important to adults who have reached the post-literacy stage is the variety of reading materials that are interesting and relevant to them. (See *Chapter Three*).

Decisions about the type of classes that will be established are best when they are based on prospective learners' own assessments of their ability to use literacy to achieve their goals. For example, out-of-school youth who had attained a basic reading ability in primary school may have relapsed into semi-literacy once they left the formal system. Fluency classes could help them to regain and expand on what they had learned previously in order to prepare them for further education or help them learn specific skills for employment. In multilingual situations, transition classes might be appropriate if community members who are already literate in their mother tongue, want to become literate also in their second language. The Adivasi people of India (described above) learned to read and write in their mother tongue in order to ease their transition to literacy in Telegu, the regional language. In other cases, people who are already literate in their second language want to transfer back to their mother tongue. The Government of Paraguay, for example, initiated special literacy classes in the formal education system for Guarani-speaking students who had been required to learn to read and write in Spanish, the language of education, but still were most comfortable using Guarani, their mother tongue (Englebrecht; Ortiz, 1983).

At the local level, educational differences among the learners also influence the way classes are organized. A women's group, for example, might choose to divide itself into two separate classes if some members have achieved a measure of fluency while others are still at the basic literacy stage. On the other hand, the two groups might choose to stay together so that the more advanced readers can tutor the beginners. Decisions about the way to divide and/or organize their classes, then, would be based on the abilities, attitudes and goals of the women themselves.

Summary

This chapter discussed several issues that should be considered before the planning of specific components of the literacy programme begins. The guiding principles, goals and objectives, established through dialogue among all the stakeholders, will, hopefully, influence decision-making throughout the life of the programme. Decisions relating to the size and scope of the literacy programme, the language(s) that will be used, and the type(s) of literacy classes that will be established will affect later decisions about other components of the programme such as teacher training and materials production. These preliminary decisions, and the manner in which they are made, will also affect the way the programme is perceived by the multiple stakeholders and, therefore, the degree to which it is accepted by them.

III. Strategies for programme implementation and maintenance

In military terminology, 'strategies' are plans for manœuvring troops and equipment into the most advantageous positions in order to achieve objectives. In relation to literacy, strategies are composed of plans for making the best use of personnel, finances, materials and supplies in order to achieve the objectives (and consequently, the long-term goals) of a literacy programme. Most strategies for literacy include six component plans:

- *Preliminary research:* collecting information that will be used to plan the programme.
- *Promotion:* generating and nurturing interest and a sense of ownership for the programme among the intended beneficiaries and supporters.
- *Recruitment and training:* identifying the personnel that will be needed for the literacy effort, developing criteria for recruitment, and planning pre-service and in-service training.
- *Curriculum development:* defining educational goals and intended learning outcomes, developing curricula and teachers' guides, and, at community level, planning the content of the lessons.
- *Materials development and production:* identifying topics that are of interest to the learners; developing infrastructures or support systems for writing and illustrating reading materials and for producing and distributing them to local communities.

- *Evaluation:* determining if the literacy programme is achieving its objectives, if it actually is serving the needs of the intended beneficiaries, and, therefore, if it is in the process of achieving its long-term goals.

These six strategic elements are common to most literacy programmes, regardless of their size or location. Whether for a state-run transitional literacy programme for immigrants in London, a community-based literacy programme sponsored by a local women's group in Kenya, or a mass literacy campaign in Nicaragua, a literacy programme strategy would include, for example, a plan for promotion or mobilization – for informing the public of the programme and encouraging their participation in it. These same six strategic elements are also common across levels of implementation and administration. Using promotion again as an example, a large-scale literacy programme needs to be promoted among government departments, funding agencies and supporting NGOs at sub-national, national and international levels, as well as among potential learners and supporters at the local level.

But while the six general strategic elements are common to most successful literacy programmes, the manner in which they are implemented is specific to each context. An 'action plan' for each element might include the following components: (1) identifying the activities that will be carried out to implement the plan in that context; (2) establishing the time-frame for completing each activity; (3) identifying the people who will be responsible for each activity and the resources that will be needed; and (4) identifying the factors that might hinder successful completion of the activity and the possible means for overcoming these problems. The following table (*Table 3.1*) is an example of several of the activities that might be part of an action plan for promotion in a provincial or state literacy programme.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the six strategic elements necessary for implementing sustainable literacy programmes. Each element is examined in relation to its purposes and to the issues and questions that should be considered in planning for its implementation and maintenance.

Table 3.1 Examples of promotional activities for a provincial literacy programme

Strategy Two. Promotion	
Activity One.	Produce bi-weekly articles on the literacy programme for publication in the provincial newspaper.
Time-frame:	Articles to be written and edited by Tuesday for publication in that week's Friday's edition.
Responsible persons:	Responsibility will be rotated among provincial staff but others will be invited to contribute as well.
Resources needed:	Co-operation from the newspaper editor; reports from provincial and local literacy staff on their programmes; stories composed by adult learners and others; information about innovations that are taking place in the literacy effort.
Possible constraints:	May have problems accessing information, stories, etc. from local programmes. (Need to maintain good communication; encourage regular reporting; encourage teachers to submit learner-composed stories for publication.)
Activity Two.	Submit scripts to the provincial radio station for bi-weekly broadcasts.
Time-frame:	Scripts to be written and edited on alternate Wednesdays for the following week's broadcast.
Responsible persons:	Responsibility will be rotated among the provincial literacy staff. Volunteers will be encouraged to submit their own ideas for broadcasts.
Resources needed:	Co-operation from the provincial radio station; literacy-related skits created and performed by teachers and learners or by primary or high-school students; information about different programmes in the province; songs composed by learners about their experiences relating to literacy.
Possible constraints:	Preparing for bi-monthly programmes might put too much pressure on provincial staff (may need to reduce the broadcasts to once a month.) Getting people to produce the skits and songs might be a problem. (Need to develop a large group of contributors immediately and make sure that their contributions are acknowledged and used as much as possible.)

Preliminary research

Preliminary research involves identifying, collecting and interpreting the information that will be needed to make planning decisions. The following are general categories of information with their related research questions:

- The motivating factors on which the programme will be based.
  - *At national and sub-national levels:* What purposes do the different stakeholders think the literacy programme should serve? What are their short- and long-term goals for the programme?
  - *At local level:* What problems have the potential learners identified that a literacy programme might help them to solve? How do they think a literacy programme could help them?

- The sociocultural, political and economic context as it will affect programme implementation and maintenance.
  - *At national and sub-national levels:* What has been the government's history in relation to supporting non-formal education generally and adult basic education specifically? What has been its history in relation to the nation's ethnolinguistic minorities? What kind of political support can be expected for the programme? How might the programme be integrated with national goals and objectives and with other government-sponsored development efforts? Which NGOs might be willing to work together in planning, implementing and maintaining the programme?
  - *At local level:* What sociocultural factors should be considered in planning the content of lessons and of reading materials? Who can teach whom in this society?

- The language(s) or dialect(s) that will be used.
  - *At national and sub-national levels:* Do prospective learners share a language that can be used in literacy classes or will each language group need to learn to read first in their mother tongue and then transfer to a language of wider communication? What language development must take place if initial literacy is to be in the mother tongues of the learners?

- *At local or language level:* Can one dialect serve the entire language community? Can traditional oral literature be put into written form? What written materials are already available in the language or dialect of instruction?

- The resources that are available for implementation and maintenance.
  - *At national and sub-national levels:* What government departments might be interested in producing awareness materials (on health and agriculture, for example) for the new readers? Can teachers colleges or vocational training centres be used as venues for training literacy teachers? What resources are available for transporting classroom supplies and reading materials to local teachers?
  - *At local level:* What community groups might be willing to sponsor the programme? Are there buildings that could be used for classes? Are there people in the community that can be trained as teachers and supervisors?

- The potential for integrating the literacy effort with the formal and non-formal (vocational) education systems (discussed further in *Chapter Four*).
  - *At national and sub-national levels:* Will adults who have achieved a level of fluency be able to enter a vocational training programme? Can young people re-enter the formal education system once they have regained fluency in reading, writing, and numeracy?

Research methods. Preliminary research requires two kinds of expertise: the technical expertise of the education specialists and the sociocultural expertise of the people who will be responsible for the local programmes. The research team might use one or more methods for gathering information, depending on the research objectives, the time and resources available, and on the type of relationship that planners want to begin developing with the different stakeholders:

- *Informal discussions.* Informal discussions with the intended beneficiaries of the programme can be the means for identifying the learners' needs and goals on which curriculum and reading materials will be based. Before beginning a basic education programme among poor people in rural Colombia, staff from the Ministry of Education met with community members to identify their immediate and long-term education goals and to determine what educational activities would best respond to their concerns and expectations. This information formed the basis for the plan for that area (Colombia, 1993).

- *Formal meetings.* Formal meetings with relevant government and non-government agencies can be used to promote the programme as well as to gather information for planning. In Papua New Guinea, the local co-ordinator of a mother-tongue literacy programme met with district and provincial education officers to inform them of the programme, learn from them what government resources might be available for it, and encourage them to participate in planning and decision-making.

- *Survey instruments.* Different survey instruments can be prepared for different populations. Questionnaires can be mailed to literate individuals and interview forms can be used in individual and group interviews. Their purpose might be to collect information for a literacy database (for example, how many school dropouts are in the community?) and to learn about people's attitudes and perceptions with regard to the literacy programme (how do adults in a community describe the educational opportunities available to them)? Group interviews have an added benefit in that responses can be used to stimulate further discussion and problem-solving by the respondents.

- *Mass media.* Electronic and print media can be used for research and for promoting the literacy programme. For example, radio broadcasts or newspaper articles dramatizing or discussing the potential benefits of literacy can conclude with an invitation to listeners or readers to send information to programme sponsors about literacy needs in their community and about literacy programmes that have already been established in their areas.

Promotion

Literacy-for-development programmes are people-centred: they consider intended beneficiaries as *partners in* rather than *targets of* development and are a product of ongoing collaboration among the different groups of stakeholder. The purpose of promotion, then, is first to encourage the non-literate public to think critically about the specific ways that literacy might benefit them and the problems it might help them solve, and secondly to encourage people's active participation in planning and maintaining the programme. This approach to development may be especially important in situations in which intended beneficiaries have been left out of decision-making in the past. Promotion serves specifically to:

- Provide preliminary information about the literacy programme and about what will be necessary to establish and maintain it.
- Invite representatives of each of the stakeholder groups – donors, government officials, NGOs, and prospective learners – to work together in planning the programme for their respective areas and begin identifying and/or developing the infrastructures that will be necessary to sustain it.
- Encourage stakeholders to begin identifying resources that can be used for implementation and maintenance and inform them of any additional outside assistance that will be available.

Planning for promotion. The possibilities for promotion are limited only by the ingenuity of the planners in making use of available resources. At local level, for example, skits can be performed at public gatherings. Schools can hold contests in which students draw pictures illustrating the value of literacy and winning entries can be posted around the community. Literate people in the community can write to government agencies, NGOs, businesses, and other potential supporters and donors to invite their involvement. At sub-national and national levels, radio stations can broadcast programmes about literacy, provide air time for listeners to call in with questions, and make regular announcements about literacy classes that are being planned. Newspapers can publish articles and stories. Formal ceremonies at national, sub-national and local levels can be held to inaugurate the literacy effort.

Planners in Tanzania used a variety of activities to promote their national literacy campaign. Radio programmes emphasized the importance of literacy and provided information about forthcoming literacy events. A 'literacy page' was a regular feature of the national newspaper. Schoolchildren and adult learners wrote songs and poems for a national competition, describing the ways they used literacy and numeracy. Winning entries were broadcast on the radio and published in newspapers. Literacy slogans were printed on tee-shirts and commemorative stamps were produced (Mpogolo, 1990).

A different method was used to promote a language-wide adult literacy programme among the Quechua in the highlands of Ecuador. In that programme, young Quechuan musicians travelled from village to village hosting 'educational fairs'. They played traditional Quechuan music, performed short skits about rural life, and put on puppet shows. Among the themes that were dramatized were the problems relating to illiteracy. At the end of each evening performance the visiting troupes asked villagers to discuss the relationship between what they observed in the songs and skits and their own lives. The purpose of the performances was to encourage villagers to form community-based organizations for literacy and development that would help them meet the specific needs they had identified (Kleymeyer; Moreno, 1989).

Recruiting and training literacy personnel

Recruiting for a literacy programme involves identifying the activities that will take place in implementing and maintaining the programme, determining the qualifications that will be needed by the personnel responsible for these activities, and securing the services of people with those qualifications. *Training* involves helping these people gain the motivation, knowledge and competencies to function creatively and effectively in their positions.

Recruiting literacy workers. The process of establishing qualifications and selecting people for the different positions is influenced by the programme's guiding principles, goals and objectives and by the context in which the different activities will take place. At each level of implementation, personnel for learner-centred literacy programmes require special personal attributes in addition to their technical and professional qualifications. They should be resourceful in adapting ideas and information to their specific situations and respected by the people with whom they work. They should appreciate the social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the different groups of learners and be committed to helping individuals and communities achieve their educational goals.

While specific activities will vary, strategies for recruitment include several components:

(1) Identifying the activities for which personnel will be required at each level of implementation.

- *At national level*, personnel will be needed for the following activities:
    - *Conducting preliminary research.*
    - *Planning the national* programme and facilitating planning at sub-national and local levels.
    - Overall co-ordination and management at the national level, including promotion, recruitment and training, curriculum and materials development, and evaluation.

- *At sub-national level*, personnel will be needed for the following activities:
    - Conducting preliminary research in the province/state, or district.
    - Planning the provincial/state or district programme and facilitating planning at local level.
    - Co-ordinating and/or conducting ongoing testing and evaluation at sub-national and local levels.
    - General co-ordination and management of the programme in the province/state or district, including promotion, recruitment and training, and curriculum and materials development.

- *At local level*, personnel will be needed for the following activities:
  - Conducting preliminary research in the community.
  - Planning the local programme (and helping to plan the national and sub-national programmes).
  - Promoting the programme in the community.
  - Maintaining classroom equipment and supplies.
  - Developing and/or adapting curriculum and reading materials.
  - Teaching classes.
  - Participating in regular evaluations of different aspects of the programme.
  - General management and co-ordination of the local programme.

(2) Determining the criteria for recruiting personnel for each position at each level, based on a realistic assessment of the people that might be available. (A qualification for a teacher trainer at sub-national level, for example, might be that the person is a certified teacher).

(3) Identifying the financial and/or other support that different personnel will require and projecting the ability to provide that support. The amount of funding available will influence the degree to which the programme must rely on volunteers who may or may not be available. (See *Chapter Four*).

(4) Planning the method of recruitment. At national and sub-national levels, procedures for recruitment follow the policies and practices of the respective government departments and NGOs. Recruiting personnel at local level begins by informing community members of the essential qualifications for people in each position (for example, teachers must be able to read fluently and write legibly in the language of instruction) and asking them to identify people that have these qualifications and are acceptable to the community in general.

Training as an ongoing process. Training for learner-centred adult literacy programmes has both a formal component (pre-service and in-service training courses) and an informal component (observation and practice under the supervision of an experienced teacher or supervisor). Ideally, formal and informal training share several general characteristics:

- Trainees participate in identifying what they need to learn and in assessing their own learning progress.
- Trainees and trainers have mutually supportive relationships.
- Adult learning characteristics are emphasized, especially as they differ from those of children.
- Trainees are encouraged to adapt what they have learned so that it is appropriate in their local situation.
- Training of trainers is a priority. Experienced teachers who have demonstrated special skills and sensitivity are encouraged and equipped to become trainers.

Formal and informal training for learner-centred literacy builds on the knowledge and experiences of the trainees as well as on the expertise of the trainer and encourages dialogue in which each facilitates the other's learning. A mutually supportive training process provides a model for trainees to follow later in their own classrooms. Helping teacher trainees to see themselves as facilitators and co-learners can be a long and difficult process, especially for those whose previous learning experiences emphasized knowledge as a product transferred from teacher to passive students rather than generated through participatory activities. Training co-ordinators in South Africa, for example, found that new trainees were shocked and confused by participatory approaches to training until they realized that their own knowledge and experiences were valuable resources both for their own and the trainers' further learning (von Kotze, 1992).

Even with excellent modelling on the part of trainers, few new teachers will be able to absorb and retain this participatory approach to teaching if a single short training course constitutes their only experience in it. Trainees need ongoing opportunities to observe experienced teachers who demonstrate the desired attitudes and behaviour in their classroom and to practice under their tutelage. Ideally, then, the training process for new teachers would involve: (*1*) several weeks observing an experienced teacher in a classroom situation; (*2*) attending a training workshop; (*3*) practice-teaching under the experienced teacher; and (*4*) attending in-service training workshops on a regular basis to meet specific training needs as they arise.

Developing curricula

In programmes that consider learning to be a self-directed, participatory process, curriculum and instructional methods are designed to help learners to achieve their personal goals for literacy. Decisions about curriculum and instruction, therefore, take into account general characteristics of adult learners:

- They possess a great deal of experience and knowledge relating to a variety of topics, are aware of their own problems, and have their own educational goals.
- They do not learn the same way as children do and do not want to be taught the same way as children are taught.
- They have many responsibilities and do not want to be involved in activities that they feel are a waste of time.
- They may be uninterested in individualized learning and uncomfortable in competitive situations or, conversely, they may enjoy competition and learn best on their own.
- They may lack self-esteem because of their inability to use print media, because they have had previous unsuccessful school experiences, because of their low social status or – if they are members of an ethnic minority – because of the low status of their language and culture.

In addition to these general characteristics, adult learners come to literacy classes with different levels of proficiency in reading, writing and numeracy and, in some cases, speaking a language that is different from the language of education.

Clearly, there is no one 'generic' curriculum that will be suitable for every group of learners. The process of curriculum development, then, begins by learning about the learners themselves and identifying what they want to learn. During the planning phase, efforts are made to determine the prospective learners' *educational goals*, the reasons why they want to become literate. Women in a rural village in Asia, for example, might want to read, write and calculate so that they can start and maintain an income-generating project. These women's educational goals would be to be able to keep business records and to maintain their own bank accounts.

If the learners' educational goals answer the question 'why,' the *curriculum* answers the question 'what'. Although there are many differing definitions of curriculum, the term here refers to the organized collection of *intended learning outcomes* – the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that will enable adult 'learners' to achieve their educational goals (Posner and Rudnitsky, 1994). Intended learning outcomes for the rural Asian women would be the specific knowledge and skills relating to reading, writing and numeracy that will be necessary for them to keep business records and maintain bank accounts.

Implied in this definition of curriculum is the possibility that the set of intended learning outcomes may be inadequate – that even though the learners gain the knowledge and skills prescribed in the curriculum, they still may be unable to meet their educational goals. Curriculum development, then, requires ongoing evaluation of learning outcomes to see if the curriculum truly is enabling learners to achieve their educational goals. If the intended learning outcomes are achieved but the educational goals have not been reached, the curriculum needs to be revised.

If the educational goals answer the question 'why', and the curriculum answers the question 'what', the *instructional method* answers the question 'how'. The instructional method includes all the *planned learning activities* that are used to achieve the intended learning outcomes. For example, if a Freirian approach is used, one of the instructional methods might involve dialogue between learners, facilitated by their teacher, about an economic, social or political concern the learners have identified (Freire, 1990).

This distinction between educational goals, curriculum, and instructional method helps explain their different functions but in practice the three are usually not so clearly separated. Educational goals influence curriculum development, which, in turn, influences decisions about which instructional method will be used.

The approach that literacy providers take to curriculum and instruction is influenced by their own perceptions of 'literacy'. On the one hand are those who consider literacy to be a technology that literate people use for their own purposes. Based on that point of view, becoming literate is an *educational* process, but not necessarily a *political* one. Curriculum and instructional methods are meant to help adult learners acquire gradually the technical skills and behaviours that the providers consider essential to reading and writing fluency. The assumption is that having gained the essential technical skills, the learners will be able to use the skills for their own specific purposes. An alternative approach to literacy is based on the assumption that the process by which people learn to read, write and calculate influences the way they will use reading, writing and numeracy in their lives. Those who take this approach argue that curriculum and instructional methods should grow out of the learners' social context and immediately begin encouraging them to think about the ways they can use literacy to solve the problems they have identified and to achieve their personal goals. Curricula and instructional methods that are meant, for example, to help adult learners improve their income-earning potential would be different from those meant to help them gain access to their religion's sacred writings or to communicate their community's needs more effectively to governmental agencies.

Planning for curriculum development. If there are not enough specialists to prepare a curriculum for each group of learners (i.e. rural and urban, women and men, those interested in using literacy to communicate with relatives and those wanting to establish a business co-operative), *curriculum frameworks* developed at sub-national, national and international levels can be adapted to the educational goals of the different learning groups. A curriculum framework is a pattern or outline that helps teachers to organize their curriculum under different topics – health, community life, and culture, for example – that are of general relevance to the adult learners in that area. The topics and curriculum content can then be adapted to each group of learners. An example of this kind of curriculum framework is UNESCO's (1989) 'Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All' training material for literacy personnel.

The process for developing, adapting, using and revising a curriculum framework for adult literacy might include the following steps:

- In national or sub-national workshops, curriculum specialists and experienced teachers develop a curriculum framework for adult literacy classes built around general topics of national or regional interest (improving family and community life, income-generation, health, etc.) that can be modified to meet the educational goals of the individual groups of learners.
- In dialogue with the prospective learners, teacher-trainees in local communities identify the learners' educational goals and the specific topics that are interesting to them.
- At pre-service training workshops, teacher-trainees become familiar with the purpose, content and instructional method associated with the curriculum framework and then modify the framework to their learner-identified topics.
- Trainees practise teaching the lessons they have prepared to other participants. This practice teaching helps them to become familiar with the curriculum and enables them to identify and correct problems with their instructional methods.
- In the learners' communities, the curriculum is tested in pilot classes and revised as necessary.

A literacy programme in the Netherlands provides an example of a learner-centred approach to curriculum and instruction. Tutors in this programme had no single teachers' guide to follow, but instead worked together with the adult learners to plan learning activities that were linked directly to their abilities and everyday experiences. Activities based on a health theme, for example, involved learning to write letters to an insurance company or writing a story about a hospital experience (Bohnenn, 1987). A literacy programme for women in South Africa used this same approach: classroom activities were based on issues and experiences from the women's everyday lives and they were encouraged to take leadership in the classroom while teachers took the role of facilitators (Mlambo, 1987).

In both of these cases the content of the curriculum and the learning activities were geared specifically to helping the learners to achieve their personal goals for literacy and increase their confidence in their own abilities. Another advantage of this approach is that the learners can immediately apply what they learn to their everyday lives. A disadvantage is that, because class periods are not highly structured, teachers must be skilled in facilitating discussion among the learners. Teachers who lack these abilities may revert to a lecture-type instructional method that leaves little room for dialogue and reaffirms the idea that knowledge belongs solely to the teacher, who is responsible for passing it to the students. This emphasizes again the importance of pre-service and in-service training that carefully models the 'teacher-as-facilitator' instructional method and provides plenty of opportunities for trainees to practise their facilitator role.

Developing and producing reading materials

Adult learners' reading materials, like the curriculum and instructional methods used in their classes, are based on the educational goals they themselves have identified. As already noted, adults generally do not learn to read because someone tells them they should. They do so because they have certain goals and they believe that literacy will help them achieve those goals. If literacy does indeed serve their purposes, they will continue to use it as a resource. If it does not, they are likely to lose interest and, eventually, whatever abilities they had gained in reading and writing. Unfortunately, this point is often overlooked by planners at international as well as national, sub-national, and local levels. A common factor in the poor long-term survival rate of literacy programmes is that planners did not foresee the ongoing need for a variety of interesting and relevant reading materials in the language(s) of the readers. Self-sustaining infrastructures for literature *development* (writing, illustrating, and editing books, games, posters, etc.) and *production* (printing or duplicating the materials using offset press, photocopiers, duplicators, or silk-screen printers) are essential for ongoing literacy.

Four general types of materials can be identified, based on the four general stages of literacy described in *Chapter Two*.

- *Materials that introduce the reading process.* Reading materials for early literacy classes help new readers to become familiar with print literature and to begin to experience the ways that literacy can help them to achieve their educational goals. Stories about familiar topics and experiences (the principle of going from the known to the unknown) may be limited in length and complexity, but not so much that language becomes stilted and unnatural. Functional materials such as banking deposit and withdrawal slips or business order forms can also be introduced at this stage if the materials are relevant to the learners' educational goals and in a language they understand, and if the learners are already familiar with the contexts in which the materials are used.

- *Materials that help learners to gain fluency.* The purpose of materials at this stage is to help learners to increase their confidence in using print media and challenge them to expand their uses of reading and writing to meet their daily needs and to be active participants in the development process. New ideas are introduced as materials increase in length and language complexity.

- *Materials that help people to transfer reading and writing from their first to their second (or third) language.* Materials at this stage assume that readers already speak and understand the new language. Dictionaries, phrase books, books of legends, songs, poetry, and stories in their first and second languages are needed for readers at this level.

- *Materials for lifelong education.* Once they have achieved fluency in their spoken languages, adult learners are able to use the printed word for a multitude of purposes that require access to an increasing variety of literature. Unfortunately, it is at this point that the system often breaks down, especially in minority language groups without a long written tradition. Planning infrastructures for literature production that will continue to provide readers with relevant and challenging reading materials are essential for meeting the needs of this reading audience.

A common tendency in materials production for adult literacy programmes, especially those that are centrally initiated and controlled, is to focus on functional topics (such as health, agriculture, or the environment) or on topics that promote civic consciousness and national unity – topics that are considered important to the central planners. But as people living in a community, learners have other reasons for reading in addition to their functional and civic needs. Directions for using fertilizer and other agricultural tips may provide important practical information but if that is the extent of the materials that are available to them, it is doubtful that new literates will develop a sustained reading habit. Planning for materials production, then, needs to take into account the readers' variety of cultural, social, spiritual and political interests. Materials originating at international and national levels about topics of common interest can be supplemented by materials developed and produced at sub-national and local levels about topics of local interest. The chart below lists several types of materials that can be developed for adult learners.

Developing and producing reading materials for adult learners living in a variety of contexts and speaking a variety of languages is a challenging task, but experiences in several countries indicate that it can be done (Bohnenn, 1987; Government of Liberia, 1987; Malone, 1989; Wendell, 1982). In addition to materials produced at central production facilities, a variety of technologies makes it possible for communities to produce their own reading materials. Desk-top publishing programmes make every computer a potential production centre. Limited quantities of materials can be reproduced

Table 2. Genres of reading materials for adult learners

Books and booklets		**Other printed materials**	
Originating locally and relating to the local context	**Originating outside the local area and translated or adapted for local use as necessary**	**Originating locally and relating to the local context**	**Originating outside the local area and translated or adapted for local use as necessary**
• biographies • autobiographies • histories and legends • stories for enjoyment about familiar activities and experiences • functional information introduced in stories about familiar people, places, activities, problems, etc. • songs and poetry	• information (health, agriculture, etc.) • histories and other materials that promote civic consciousness • biographies of national figures • sacred scriptures • stories about different cultural groups from within and outside the country • stories for enjoyment	• posters • games • newsletters • calendars	• posters • games • newsletters • newspapers • calendars • charts • cards • functional materials (tax forms, bank statements, etc.)

on photocopiers. In areas where electronic technology is not available, hand-operated duplicators and silk-screen printers can be used to produce books, posters, newsletters, and other materials to meet the reading needs of new learners.

Approaches for developing and producing reading materials. Four approaches to developing and production a variety of reading materials can be considered, ranging from the simple to the more

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sophisticated: (1) materials can be composed by the leaners themselves; (2) materials can be composed by others in the community; (3) prototype materials developed outside the community can be modified and/or translated to fit the local context; and (4) materials of general interest can be produced centrally.

Materials composed by the learners themselves. Reading materials can arise from in-class discussions about issues that concern the adult learners. In this process the learners discuss a relevant topic and then compose their own story, poem, song, etc. about the topic. The group dictates its composition to the teacher, who writes it on a blackboard or poster to use in the day's reading lesson. If the learners decide that it is worth preserving, the composition can be made into a booklet or poster and illustrated by the learners. For example, in literacy programmes in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and other Pacific islands, adult learners made their own posters relating to sanitation, nutrition, health issues, and family planning and produced their own books, comics, and news-sheets (Jones, 1991). Learner-produced materials with broader appeal can be duplicated and distributed to other communities and, in multilingual situations, translated into other languages.

For this process to be successful, the teacher must be prepared to ask questions that generate dialogue and to encourage members of the group to contribute to discussions. The advantages of this process are that it guarantees that the material is relevant to the learners; it is cost-effective for a limited number of learners if local technology is used; and it emphasizes to new readers that their ideas can be put into written form to be preserved and communicated to others.

Original materials developed by others in the community. Literacy teachers and other educated local people can compose reading materials about topics that are interesting to adult learners in their community. Locally developed materials for new readers might communicate functional information in story form about familiar activities and people (a story about a community health problem, for example, or about a local person who overcame a common difficulty). If appropriate, oral forms of traditional stories, songs, poetry, and sacred sayings can also be put into written form.

An example of this approach to materials production comes from a mother-tongue community-based literacy programme in Papua New Guinea. Young people from the community who had learned to read in the national language were introduced to the written form of their language and to the basic techniques of creative writing. They wrote local legends and stories about events and activities that were familiar in the community. Those with artistic ability illustrated the booklets. An editor's checklist was created to help them to edit each other's materials. The young people then learned how to put their stories and illustrations on to stencils and to print them using a hand-operated duplicator and silk-screen printers. Within nine months, over 120 different booklets had been produced. The booklets were tested in the classroom and in the community in general for two years, after which time the best were compiled into a set of 17 fifty-page readers and printed on offset press.

An advantage of this community-based approach is that the materials are about topics familiar to the readers and in a language they understand. The materials can be produced relatively cheaply and in limited quantities. A disadvantage is that the process requires access to supplies and technology that may not be available in every situation. Another possible disadvantage is that materials produced with local technology (such as silk-screen printers or drum duplicators) may not be as attractive to the readers as materials produced on offset press. At some point, then, the best locally produced materials may need to be collected and re-printed using a more technologically sophisticated format.

Prototype materials modified and/or translated to fit the local context. A third way to increase the quantity and variety of reading materials for adult learners is to modify and/or translate centrally produced prototype materials so that they are appropriate to local linguistic and cultural contexts. One application of this approach (adapted from Trainum, 1989) has the following components:

(1) Limited quantities of prototype booklets in a national or regional language, relating to a variety of topics, are produced in a central location using desk-top publishing programmes.

(2) A list of the topics is distributed to community literacy workers, who select those that will be interesting to local readers. The selected prototype booklets are sent to the community, together with the supplies for producing the translated materials *(see below)*.

(3) Local writers learn the principles and methods for modifying and/or translating text from the prototype materials so that it is appropriate for adult readers in their community. Once the modifications and/or translations are approved, texts are produced using one of several methods:

- If computer technology is available to workshop participants, illustrations and page layout (with empty text boxes) for each prototype book are put on floppy disks and sent to the workshop site. Translated text is inserted into the appropriate text boxes and the pages are printed and duplicated.

- If there are no computer facilities at the workshop site, an alternative to this method is to type or write the translated text and send it to the central production site where it is inserted into the appropriate text boxes. The translated books are then printed, duplicated, and sent back to the community.

- A second alternative can be used if computer technology is not available locally. In this case, the pages of the prototype book, with its illustrations, page numbers, and empty text boxes, are printed onto stencils (using a dot matrix printer) at the central production site. The printed stencils matching the pages of each prototype book are sent to the workshop. When the translated text has been checked and approved, it is typed or written by hand in the appropriate text boxes on each stencil. Silk-screen printers or hand-operated duplicators are then used to produce the desired number of copies of the new book.

An advantage of this approach is that it makes possible the production of limited quantities of a variety of materials in multiple languages and dialects – an important consideration for governments attempting to meet the early educational needs of their linguistic minorities. A potential problem with the approach is that inexperienced translators may translate texts literally, resulting in confusing and/or stilted language that is difficult for new readers to understand. Another potential problem is that inadequate understanding of the original text – a recipe for rehydration fluid for infants with diarrhoea, for example – might result in a dangerously inaccurate translation. Clearly written prototype materials, good understanding of the principles and techniques of translation, and careful checking can help to overcome these potential difficulties.

Materials about topics of general interest produced centrally in a common language. Although their early reading materials focus on topics that are familiar to them, most adult readers will also want access to information and ideas about the world outside their community. Indeed, if the content of their library is limited to the things they already knew before they started literacy classes, they would have little reason to learn to read. The fourth approach, then, involves training people from government and non-government agencies to produce graded reading materials that relate to their particular areas of expertise. In Fiji, for example, posters produced in the *lingua franca* and in local languages by various regional agencies such as the World Health Organization, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, and the National Diabetes Centre were distributed to adult literacy classes to stimulate discussion about health and environmental topics (Jones, 1991). Ideally, centrally produced functional materials are developed in collaboration with the communities of readers. In Liberia, a materials production seminar was conducted in 1987 for representatives of 11 different Liberian ministries and NGOs. Participants were divided into four groups, each responsible for developing adult literacy materials relating to one of four main topics: agriculture, culture, health, and women in development. To identify specific topics within each category that would be interesting to the new readers, the workshop was held in a rural area in which classes were being held. Each of the four groups of participants met with local supervisors, organizers, and literacy instructors to learn about the environment in which the community literacy programmes were taking place and develop profiles of the adult learners. The materials that were produced by each of the four groups were based directly on the information gathered in these village visits (Government of Liberia, 1987).

An advantage of this centralized approach is that it can multiply the variety and quantity of reading materials available to adult learners once they have acquired the ability and self-assurance to tackle new ideas and information written in less familiar styles and possibly in a second language. A potential disadvantage is that centrally produced materials may require a level of reading fluency and mastery of a second language that new readers have not yet acquired. The first problem can be overcome if materials are graded in complexity and content, from short and simple to longer and more difficult. The second potential problem points to the need for transitional literacy classes to be a built-in component of the programme plan.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the means by which designers, practitioners, and beneficiaries of learner-centred adult literacy programmes assess the process of implementation and the degree to which the programme is achieving its short-term objectives and long-term goals. Equally important, evaluation identifies the reasons why the programme is or is not achieving its goals and objectives. The general purposes for regularly evaluating literacy programmes are listed below, followed in parentheses by examples of the specific kinds of questions that might be used to generate information:

- *To measure what has been achieved in each stage of implementation against the objectives for that stage.* (If a provincial training objective was that 20 trainers would be fully prepared to conduct training courses by the end of the first year of implementation, how many actually have been prepared and how well are they functioning in their roles? If an objective for a community programme was to have ten health-related booklets in the local language at the end of six months, how many have actually been produced?)

- *To determine whether the programme is meeting the short- and long-term educational goals of the learners.* (If learners said that by the end of six months they wanted to be able to do their personal banking independently, how do they describe their progress at the end of that time period? What problems do they still identify?)

- *To learn about existing problems in order to devise appropriate solutions.* (What problems are hindering co-operation between government agencies and NGOs at national or sub-national level and how can these relationships be improved? At local level, why are some teachers reverting to using the same instructional method for adults as they themselves experienced in school as children, and what can be done to help them overcome that tendency?)

- *To identify goals and objectives that need to be revised.* (How realistic was the objective for training trainers and what needs to be changed? Do the long-range goals established by the programme sponsors still incorporate the educational goals of the learners themselves? If not, how can the two be reconciled?)

- *To measure the results of the programme against its costs.* (If it cost X amount of money to run a national workshop for people from all over the country, were the outcomes worth the cost or would district-level workshops be a more efficient use of training funds? Is it cost-effective to produce and distribute reading materials from a central location or might it be better to establish production facilities at regional, provincial or district levels?)

- *To provide information for donor agencies and other stakeholders.* (If a donor agency provided a grant to train people to produce resource materials, how many materials were actually produced and how are they being received by the adult learners?)

- *To gather insights that can be shared with others.* (If a neighbouring state or province wants to use this programme as a model, what lessons have been learned that will help them plan their new programme?)

- *To assess the quality of materials that have been produced.* (Is the subject matter appropriate for the intended audiences? Is the content interesting to them? Is the language appropriate for their reading level? Is the information presented in a clear and meaningful way? Are the materials being used?)

External and internal evaluators. Evaluation of literacy programmes at each level of implementation may involve both external and internal evaluators. *External* evaluators bring to the process their theoretical and technical expertise, their outsider's perspective and, hopefully, a measure of objectivity. *Internal* evaluators are familiar with the context in which the programme takes place; they understand the relationships and the power structures; they know the local stakeholders' values and their hopes for the programme; and they are able to interpret the attitudes and behaviour of the people who are interviewed.

Types of evaluation. Evaluations provide information that can help in implementing and managing a literacy programme (formative evaluations) and information about the programme's long-term impact on individuals, groups, communities, institutions, and society in general (summative evaluations). *Formative evaluations* are usually conducted by internal evaluators – those, including the learners, who are involved in implementing and managing the programme. They take place at regular intervals throughout the life of the programme in order to generate information relating to the following general questions:

- What progress has been made in achieving the programme's short- and long-term goals and objectives?
- How effective are the infrastructures that have been estab-lished for promotion, recruitment and training, curriculum development, and for materials development and production?
- What problems have been identified with the programme?
- What are the programme's strengths?

- How can the programme plan be modified to overcome its problems and build on its strengths?

Summative evaluations are conducted at the close of a programme or after the learners have completed their course of instruction. While insiders may help plan and conduct a summative evaluation and take part in interpreting its findings, the main evaluators are usually outsiders who have not been involved in programme planning or implementation and supposedly have no stake in the evaluation results. Summative evaluations provide information relating to the following general questions:

- To what degree were the long-term goals of the programme sponsors and of the individual learners met?
- How could the same goals have been achieved for less cost?
- What were the unplanned outcomes?
- What have the stakeholders learned that will help them sustain and extend this programme or that will benefit others planning their own programmes?

Types of evaluations. Evaluations can be both qualitative and quantitative. *Qualitative evaluations* answer the question, 'How well did we do?' They describe:

- *The impact of the literacy programme on the lives of the learners.* (How are they using what they learned? How do they describe the relevance of what they learn in class or read in books? How do they feel about their ability to achieve their goals? How has the programme affected their attitudes about their language and culture or about their future in the larger society?)
- *Behaviour and attitudes of the teachers.* (What kind of relationship do teachers have with the adult learners in their classrooms? How do the teachers describe their role vis-à-vis the learners? How do the learners describe the teacher's role? How has participation in the literacy programme affected the

teachers' self-perceptions? How has it influenced their personal and occupational goals?)

- *Quality of resources.* (How do those involved in implementation and management describe the resources available to them? How do they describe the efforts of different entities involved in the programme? How do adult learners describe the reading materials that are available to them?)

While qualitative evaluations answer the question, 'How well did we do?' *quantitative evaluations* answer the question, 'How much did we do?' They provide information about:

- *Students, teachers, supervisors, classes.* (How many people enrolled in classes? Of those that enrolled, what percentage completed the course? How many teachers and supervisors have been trained? How many are still in their jobs after a certain time period?)

- *Numbers of materials produced and used.* (How many booklets on health (or agriculture, etc.) have been produced for new readers? How many prototype materials have been produced? How many teachers requested the series on income-generating projects, or civic consciousness, etc.?)

- *Learners' abilities.* (What were the learners' scores on reading, writing, and numeracy tests at the end of the instructional period?)

- *Costs in relation to the number of teachers trained, materials produced, etc.* (What was the training budget for the past year? What other sources provided funding? What was the total cost of training?)

Although qualitative and quantitative evaluations are described separately here, they are usually more closely related in actual practice and both are needed to provide the best understanding of an adult literacy programme. In addition to information about learners' test scores, for example, programme sponsors might also want to know how the adult learners describe the impact of a literacy programme on their lives. Programme managers may want to assess the quality of the reading materials that were produced, but they also want information about the number of each title that was produced at what cost. Managers may want to know how many teachers were trained in a certain time period and also how well the teachers applied the instructional method they had learned in training workshops. To meet these different kinds of information needs, several types of instruments might be used in a single evaluation project: interviews, questionnaires, observation, tests, self-reports (written or oral), surveys, and studies of written documents (records, minutes, etc.).

Planning evaluations. Planning evaluations involves thinking through and discussing several preliminary questions, relating to the points above:

- *Why is the evaluation needed?* What specific purposes will it serve? Whom will it benefit?

- *Who will be involved in deciding what will be evaluated and what questions will be asked?* Will donors, government planners, participating NGOs, teachers, learners, communities, all of the stakeholders, be involved?

- *What will be evaluated?* Will it be the training methods, teachers' performance, reading materials, learners' attitudes, learners' reading levels?

- *When will the evaluations take place?* Will the programme be evaluated at the beginning to learn if there is agreement about the programmes' goals and objectives? Will it be evaluated at the end of each year of implementation to see how well objectives are being met? Will it be evaluated five years after adult learners have completed literacy classes to determine the programme's long-term impact on their lives?

- *How will the evaluation results be used?* Will the existing programme plan be revised to take into account the results of the evaluation? If so, who will be involved in interpreting the information that will guide the revision process? Will the results be published? If so, who will be involved in preparing the report?

Although regular and ongoing evaluations are generally recognized as essential to a sustainable literacy programme – or for any development effort – few programme plans (and budgets) actually include them as an integral part of the implementation and management process. The result is that mistakes continue to be made, needs continue to go unmet, and the hopes and dreams of potential beneficiaries continue to be unrealized. Evaluations need not be costly, especially if large fees are not paid to external experts. Equipping representatives of the different stakeholder groups to participate in evaluating their programme is cost-effective and, equally important, confirms that the programme being evaluated truly belongs to them.

Summary

This chapter discussed the six components of an effective strategy for implementing a sustainable, learner-centred adult literacy programme. Preliminary research provides the information on which the programme plan is based. Promotion deals with mobilizing the human, material, and financial resources that will be needed to implement and sustain the programme. Recruitment and training are necessary to identify the different positions that will be required to maintain the programme, establish the qualifications that people will need in each position, and to identify, recruit, and train people to function effectively in those roles. Curriculum development is the process of learning the educational goals of the learners, identifying the learning outcomes that will enable them to achieve their educational goals, and developing instructional methods and learning activities to achieve the learning outcomes. Development and production of the variety of reading materials that will enable learners to meet their educational goals and encourage them to consider education a lifelong process, must be planned. Evaluation is needed for the ongoing assessment of the individual components of the literacy programme and the overall impact of the programme on the lives of the learners and teachers and on society in general. Taken together, the six components represent a total strategy that addresses the question, 'How do we get there from here?' As in most long-term plans, the quality of the programme will depend on many intangibles, including the variety of human resources that will participate in its planning, implementation, management, and support. Encouraging, equipping, and empowering all those participants will be a key ingredient in the programme's long-term 'success'.

IV. Features of sustainable literacy programmes

Why do so many adult literacy programmes that began with such promise ultimately fail to achieve their goals? Although each programme is unique, a study of the relevant literature reveals several general characteristics of programmes that have not been sustained:

- They lacked strong leadership.
- They did not have the committed and ongoing support of their stakeholders.
- There was poor co-ordination of the supporting entities' efforts.
- Teachers were not adequately trained.
- Instructional methods were inappropriate.
- There was an inadequate supply of relevant and interesting reading materials.
- Infrastructures had not been established for the different components of the programme.

Conversely, those literacy programmes that have been maintained over time and are considered successful by those who plan, manage, support, and assess them, have a different set of characteristics. The most basic of these – and the one stressed throughout this booklet – is that the programmes are valued by the people they are meant to serve: learners have experienced their programme's benefits in their lives and are actively engaged in maintaining and improving it. Other features relating to sustainability include a wise use of resources, co-operative relationships among the supporting entities, infrastructures that have been established and institutionalized to maintain the different components of the programme, and ongoing educational opportunities for the adult learners. The remainder of this chapter discusses these last four features of sustainable programmes.

Feature One: Wise use of human, material, and financial resources

Few governments, NGOs, funding agencies, or local communities have the capabilities or commitment to take sole responsibility for financing a literacy programme over an extended period of time. Programmes are more likely to be sustained when they are actively supported by a variety of national, sub-national, and local supporting institutions and make wise use of the human, material, and financial resources supplied by these entities.

Committed and well-equipped *people* are the most important resource for sustaining any literacy programme. People who understand the context in which a programme takes place are needed to establish its goals and objectives and to be active participants in ongoing planning and decision-making. They are responsible for implementing, managing, and assessing their programme, for producing curricula and reading materials, and for teaching classes.

Developing these human resources (discussed in *Chapter Three*) involves recruiting the best people for each task and providing them with the ongoing training and support they need to function effectively in their positions. One means by which government agencies and NGOs demonstrate their support for a literacy programme is to make their own personnel available to help with its different components. A teachers college, for example, might provide personnel to help train trainers; a provincial NGO might designate staff to help communities establish their own materials production centres; local teachers or religious leaders might volunteer to teach adult literacy classes. An advantage of 'seconding' or borrowing staff from other agencies is that the seconded personnel bring their relevant expertise to the literacy effort but continue to be supported financially by their sending agency. A possible disadvantage is that if the agency's priorities change or if it loses its own funding or leaves the area, the literacy programme is left without the leadership it needs. Ideally, then, seconded personnel – especially those in leadership positions – begin immediately to train counterparts to take over their roles.

Another possible resource for personnel is the volunteer sector. Expansion of community-based literacy programmes in Ghana, for example, was possible in spite of the fact that the programmes had no long-term funding sources. All the teachers and most of the part-time supervisors were volunteers who received 'informal' reimbursement from the communities they served. The limited outside funds that were available were used for in-depth training and to purchase classroom materials (Hampton, 1994). Nicaragua's national literacy programme also depended on volunteer teachers, who were given a raincoat, boots, a lantern, basic educational supplies and approximately US$15 a year as a token of appreciation for the work they were doing (Arnove, 1994).

Advantages of using volunteer workers – especially those who are familiar with the sociocultural setting in which they work – are that they bring a special sense of motivation to their work and, ideally, they are valued members of the communities they serve. A possible disadvantage of using volunteer staff is that they may lack the professional qualifications of seconded or salaried workers. Also, it may be difficult for volunteers, especially in poorer areas, to sustain their enthusiasm for the programme if they do not receive some kind of remuneration for their efforts.

Material resources are also needed for programme sustainability. Ingenuity in the identification and use of these resources can allow a programme to survive in spite of financial problems. When a programme lacks funds for new buildings, for example, classes, materials production, and teacher training workshops might be held in homes, places of worship, empty school rooms, and even under trees. When offset press and computers are not available, teachers can use hand-operated duplicators or silk-screen printers to produce their reading materials. When clean paper is not on hand, the blank sides of advertising fliers and used computer paper can substitute in classrooms and for local book production. Heavy paper bags and cardboard can be used for the covers of locally produced books. And when even used paper is not available, learners can practise writing on bark, banana leaves, and even sand or dirt. While it is highly unlikely that literacy programmes lacking basic necessities such as paper, pencils, and books will be sustained over a long period of time, creativity in identifying and using available resources can help to carry it through periods of financial difficulty.

At some point, of course, *financial resources* will also be required if a programme is to be sustained, especially at national and sub-national levels. Money is needed to conduct training courses, purchase supplies, produce curricula and reading materials, conduct evaluations, and pay salaries. Even programmes that are committed to financial independence may require financial assistance as they expand. To help ensure sustainability of their programme, planners and managers need to identify a variety of donor agencies, prepare reasonable and coherent funding proposals, and develop self-sustaining infrastructures for accountability and reporting. If managers have no experience in this area, these skills can be included in their training process. Supporting agencies – government departments, businesses, or NGOs – might conduct short management training courses in which manager-trainees learn how to write proposals, maintain records, and prepare financial reports.

In addition to the financial contributions from funding agencies, local communities can help maintain their programme by paying school fees or by providing food or services for teachers and for local training workshops. Businesses can also be encouraged to support literacy programmes as in northern Thailand, where a group of business leaders helped fund a mother-tongue literacy programme for a rural ethnic minority group.

Sustainable literacy programmes are not necessarily those with large budgets but, rather, are those where communities use wisely the resources that are available to them. A mountain villager in Melanesia summarized this point in his observation about a poor but wise husband and wife participating in a community exchange of cooked meat: "That couple is most admired because, although they have only a few animals to share, they have divided them wisely and all their friends and relatives are returning home with happy hearts. But the rich ones, with many animals, have distributed their meat carelessly and have upset many of their friends and relatives." So it is with the human, material and financial resources used in literacy for development. Those who use resources wisely can satisfy many people, even when their resources are limited.

Feature Two: Co-operative relationships among supporting agencies

Government agencies and NGOs at national, sub-national, and local levels have different strengths and resources, all of which can help to promote sustainability of adult literacy programmes. Funding agencies tend to consider NGOs more efficient than government bureaucracies in using funds and able to respond more rapidly and effectively to needs expressed by people in local communities. NGOs, therefore, might be more successful than government agencies in attracting outside funds for their projects. Government agencies, on the other hand, have access to large-scale financial, material, and human resources and political support that are not available to NGOs, and they can provide linkages between the adult literacy programme and other development efforts. By co-operating with the government, NGOs are able to reach a broader segment of the population than they could on their own and, in partnership with NGOs, government agencies are able to participate more effectively in grass-roots development and to provide the institutional and policy frameworks that encourage and support self-reliance. The most productive arrangement, then, is one in which government agencies, NGOs, outside donors, and local communities each take responsibility for specific aspects of the literacy programme and all share in its planning, decision-making, and support.

Two examples of this kind of co-operative effort were described in *Chapter Two*. The first one was the 1980 national literacy campaign in Nicaragua, in which the Ministries of Education, Culture, the

Interior, Social Services, Health, Planning, and Transport worked together with national and local NGOs in planning, mobilizing, and implementing the campaign (Arnove, 1989). The second example was Papua New Guinea's national literacy programme, which was initiated by the National Department of Education in 1989 to support NGO and provincial government literacy efforts. NGOs continue to be active partners with the Department of Education in training and materials production at national and sub-national levels.

The potential benefits that such inter-agency co-operation provide for literacy and development programmes raises an important question: if this kind of co-operation is of such obvious value, why is so little of it in evidence around the world? Frequently, a lack of co-operation is the result of mistrust and sometimes jealousy among participating agencies. But more often than not, the lack of co-operation is the result of ignorance of shared goals and interests – an ignorance that can only be removed when channels of communication are kept open and put to frequent use. Talking to each other and, perhaps more important, listening to each other, can be a key to establishing co-operative arrangements that will result in achieving long-term goals that none of the agencies – governmental or non-governmental – could achieve on their own.

Feature Three: Institutionalized infrastructures

An 'institution' can be thought of as an organized human activity that serves a specific purpose and has become an integral part of the society in which it was initiated. Institutionalized programmes have been integrated with firmly established infrastructures at national, sub-national, and local levels. A city library, for example, administers an urban adult literacy programme, or a literacy programme for out-of-school youth is integrated with a vocational training programme. If infrastructures do not exist or are ineffectual or inappropriate, new infrastructures are established, either within an existing agency or as a separate entity.

The advantage of integrating a literacy programme with an established infrastructure is that it can give the literacy effort credibility and make available personnel and finances that are necessary for sustainability. A potential disadvantage is that the literacy component may be ignored (or worse, obstructed) if decision-makers in the established infrastructure have other priorities. A potential danger in placing a literacy programme within a single government department is that the programme may be isolated from other agencies and NGOs, which may then abdicate responsibility for it. Also, established institutions may be unwilling or unable to adapt themselves to the people-centred approach to development that is essential to adult literacy efforts. Giving responsibility for the programme to a government department with a well-entrenched 'top-down' man-agement system, may result in yet another development effort that is planned and implemented from the top without input from the people who must live with its consequences. Participants at a planning session for a new adult basic education programme in South Africa may have had these potential problems in mind when they recommended that, rather than giving responsibility for the programme to an existing state agency, a state-funded NGO should be created, or an independent unit established within a government ministry, to administer the literacy programme (Tyacke, Jacobsen, French, 1992). The planners apparently believed that a new, autonomous infrastructure would be more effective and more likely to keep the adult programme as its priority.

Whether new institutions are created, however, or existing institutions are utilized, institution-building for adult literacy involves more than finding a 'home' for the literacy programme. It also includes establishing mutually supportive relationships with a variety of entities that are committed to people-centred development and working with them to establish a broad base of support for the programme.

Feature Four: Opportunities for ongoing education

The most important ingredient of a successful, sustained adult literacy programme is that learners have recognized the long-term benefits of the programme for their lives. 'Literacy' involves more than the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy and wise planning for literacy involves planning also for post-literacy, for integrating the literacy effort with other programmes that foster the learners' ongoing education and development.

Formal and vocational education provides bridges to other opportunities. In some countries, adults who have achieved speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in the dominant language can enter a distance education programme and from there enter (or in some cases, re-enter) the formal education system. In other situations post-literate adults can move into the vocational system and then, once they achieve the necessary competencies, into the formal education system. Several models for this type of integration have been developed. In the plan for youth and adult post-literacy in Thailand (UNESCO, 1988), learners who complete six months of basic or functional literacy could move into 'Level One': 500 hours of academic and functional education courses that are equivalent to the first six grades of primary school. Having completed Level One successfully, they would be eligible to enter the formal education system at the lower-secondary level (grade 7). Learners who chose to remain in the vocational system could move to Level Two, a two-year programme of academic, functional, and vocational courses. Having completed Level Two, they could enter the formal education system at the upper-secondary level or enrol in academic and vocational continuing education courses in Level Three. Finally, learners who completed this third level of classes were eligible to enter the formal system at university level.

In Papua New Guinea's proposed model (Papua New Guinea. Department of Education, 1991), adults who achieve basic speaking, reading, and writing proficiency in English (the language of formal education) could enter the 'College of Distance Education' (CODE) where they could progress from early primary equivalency through high school by successfully completing the required correspondence courses. From CODE, they could move into vocational training or high school and eventually into tertiary institutions. While both these models describe exciting possibilities, the process of adapting the formal system to accommodate adult learners is more problematic and requires a level of education reform that may exceed a nation's political and economic capabilities and commitment. Integration of the adult literacy programme with the vocational education system may be a more realistic goal, at least until the literacy programme is firmly established, its success is acknowledged, and the government is committed to providing adult learners with education opportunities equivalent to those that are available to children.

Community-based education opportunities. Post-literacy or continuing education classes conducted in local communities provide a less ambitious but still valuable means for adults to continue their education. The choice of topics for these classes belongs to the learners themselves, based on the needs and goals they have identified. A study of the relevant literature reveals that topics most commonly covered in post-literacy classes are grouped into several general categories: (1) community and civic issues (studies of the nation's system of government, for example); (2) sociocultural and spiritual issues (histories; traditional legends, songs, poetry; studies of sacred writings); (3) functional knowledge and skills (vehicle maintenance, repairing sewing machines, establishing a business); and health issues (family planning; nutrition). Post-literacy classes can also be a means for adults to engage actively in development processes by taking on projects that involve them in political, economic, and educational reform (writing letters to protest deforestation, for example) or producing their own newspapers or news-sheets that deal with issues they think are important. Sustainability of a post-literacy programme is influenced first by the degree to which it helps learners meet their educational goals. Second, success depends on the support of relevant organizations such as health or insurance agencies, automobile manufacturers, or family planning associations that are willing to produce reading materials that relate to the learners' interests and are appropriate to their reading levels.

Maintaining a learning environment. If their only reading materials are old primers – a not uncommon situation in many literacy programmes, especially among speakers of minority languages – adult learners may quickly conclude that the benefits they might derive from being 'literate' are not worth the effort it takes them to learn to read and write. On the other hand, even with limited access to ongoing formal or vocational education programmes, adult learners may still be encouraged to continue learning, and to use what they learn, if they have access to an ongoing supply of relevant, interesting reading materials. Community libraries and reading clubs can serve as education resource centres if books, newspapers, games, and other reading materials are interesting to the learners, challenge them with new information and ideas, and are maintained in good condition.

A challenge to planners, implementers, and managers is to foster the development of national, sub-national, and local infrastructures that will produce materials that people want to read – a process that must begin with preliminary research and planning and continue through the life of the programme.

Summary

This chapter discussed the main characteristics of successful, sustained adult literacy programmes. The first is that adequate human, material, and financial resources have been committed to the programme and are used wisely. Second is that the programme is supported through the ongoing co-operative efforts of governmental and non-governmental agencies. The third feature is that infrastructures for implementing and maintaining the programme have been institutionalized. Fourth is that the adult learners are encouraged to continue their post-literacy education and are supported in their long-term educational goals. Planning for sustainability, it is clear, does not begin one, two, three or more years after an adult literacy programme has been implemented. Wise planners have learned that if the programme is to be sustained over a long period of time, planning for the future begins with planning for implementation.

Conclusion

Planning sustainable literacy programmes for adults has always been a complex and difficult task. However, that complexity has not always been recognized. Various attempts – with varying degrees of success – have focused on social reform, self-determination, problem-solving, or political action as decisive elements influencing sustainability. As educational planners have gained experience and expertise in addressing the sociocultural, economic, political, linguistic and educational implications of adult literacy programmes, they have discovered the critical importance of the adult learners themselves as key resources in implementing and maintaining the programmes that are meant to benefit them. The intent of this book, therefore, has been to highlight those innovations and approaches that place the adult learners at the *active* – rather than passive – centre of the education-for-development process.

Learner-centred adult literacy programmes that are based on this 'bottom-up' approach to development have several characteristics that set them apart from the more traditional 'top-down' approaches to adult literacy:

1. Adult learners are full participants in planning, implementing, assessing, and managing their programmes.

2. Curricula and teaching methods help learners to gain confidence and creativity in solving their problems and achieving their goals.

3. Reading materials are based on the learners' interests, are written in the language(s) they speak, address the problems they have identified, and help them to achieve their personal and community goals.

4. Participating individuals and groups do more than promote the teaching of reading, writing, and numeracy. They are committed also to re-shaping societal norms and structures so that the adult learners will be encouraged and enabled to become active participants in the economic, political, and sociocultural affairs of the world around them.

In spite of their best efforts, planners cannot anticipate every element that is essential for the success and sustainability of their adult literacy-for-development programmes. The individuals and communities that are intended to benefit from these programmes frequently have their own plans and goals that may remain unarticulated or unheard. Or, they may become articulated in the course of implementation, in which case the implementers need to be sufficiently flexible and in tune with the community so as to be able to adjust the programme to these new elements. To the extent that these unarticulated factors are in harmony with the literacy programme's goals and objectives, the project is likely to go forward. If, however, the programme goals or strategies are at odds with those of the community in general and of the individual adult learners in particular, obstacles will arise and frustration set in – all of which underscores the necessity of ongoing, open, and non-threatening communication among all the stakeholders.

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The booklet

This booklet presents readers with an overview of concepts and practices that are basic to planning, implementing and managing adult literacy programmes. While acknowledging the complexities of developing literacy programmes that are part of larger development efforts, the authors present practical approaches to participatory planning and decision making that promote learner-centred programmes. Specific issues that are addressed include making preliminary decisions about the programme's guiding principles, goals, size, language(s) of instruction, and the types of classes that will be established; formulating strategies for implementation and maintenance; and taking actions that help to ensure programme sustainability.

The authors

Susan E. Malone is an International Literacy Consultant with the Summer Institute of Linguistics. She is currently Visiting Professor at Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand, as well as having an appointment at the University of Texas, in Arlington, USA.

Robert F. Arnove is Professor of International and Comparative Education and co-coordinator of the doctoral programme in Educational Policy Studies at Indiana University, Bloomington, USA. He has worked extensively in popular education programmes in Latin America and is the co-editor of *National Literacy Programmes: Historical and Comparative Perspectives.*